



## **MAYOR DAVID J. NARKEWICZ**

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### **Sean Donovan Hired as Implementation Director for Department of Community Care**

NORTHAMPTON - Today, Mayor David J. Narkewicz announced the hiring of Northampton resident, Sean Donovan, as Implementation Director for the city's new Department of Community Care.

The Department of Community Care Implementation Director (DCCID) is responsible for the creation and implementation of a Department of Community Care, one of the key recommendations of the Northampton Policing Review Commission (NPRC). The goal of this new city agency is to respond to calls related to mental health, substance use, social service-related requests, and other crisis situations of Northampton residents and visitors as an alternative to a traditional police response.

Since 2012, Mr. Donovan has worked for the peer-led support and advocacy organization, Wildflower Alliance, in Holyoke, where he is currently the Transformation Project Coordinator. He has served in multiple roles at the agency, including supervising peer support advocates, developing training and curriculum around harm reduction and suicide prevention practices, and working with non-profits and marginalized communities around the Pioneer Valley. Sean attended Hampshire College and later graduated from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He has been active in local efforts to reform public safety approaches, including the NPRC process.

"I'm excited that we've found the right person to lead our effort to rapidly build a Department of Community Care," said Mayor Narkewicz, "Sean has been deeply involved in our local conversation about community safety and brings the experience, skills, and established relationships necessary to get this critical initiative underway."

The DCCID is responsible for working with and reporting directly to the Mayor to assemble the new city department, including developing its staffing and organizational structure, job descriptions, operating policies, and training and licensure requirements, as well as coordinating with other city departments, doing community and stakeholder outreach, forming an advisory committee, developing a budget, and pursuing the many emerging state and federal grants for this work.

"I am deeply grateful that our city has decided to invest in a new approach to public safety that builds on the wisdom of lived experience and from it explores what life-affirming work and supports can emerge," said Sean Donovan, "I'm grateful to have been chosen to lead the effort to build Northampton's Department of Community Care."

Mayor Narkewicz was advised during the search and hiring process by a committee of elected and appointed officials, city employees, and subject-matter experts and people with lived experience. That committee included City Council President and Mayor-elect Gina-Louise Sciarra, with whom Mayor Narkewicz conferred before finalizing the hire. Sean Donovan will begin his new role with the City of Northampton on December 15, 2021.

## **BACKGROUND**

On July 9, 2020, the Northampton Policing Review Commission (NPRC), a 15-member resident commission, was appointed jointly by the Mayor and City Council to conduct a sweeping public policy review and community conversation about policing and community safety and recommend reforms to the current organizational and oversight structures, municipal funding allocations, and policies and ordinances that together could transform how the city delivers policing services while ensuring community safety equitably and justly for all. The Commission delivered its final report entitled [\*Reimagining Safety\*](#) on March 18, 2021.

One of the primary recommendations of the NPRC was the establishment of a new “Department of Community Care” to provide multiple types of civilian responders to community needs, including peer response to mental health and substance use crises, as an alternative to police response. The NPRC report called for funding the establishment of this new department in FY2022 with a goal of making it operational by FY2023. It also made other immediate recommendations including further data analysis of police calls and staffing, a community needs assessment, and additional items requiring further study and community engagement.

Mayor Narkewicz’s FY2022 budget adopted by the City Council included \$423,955 for a new Department of Community Care and the specific senior-level project coordinator hire being announced today. The city also received an additional \$150,000 state budget appropriation secured by Senator Jo Comerford to support this new initiative.

For more information, contact the Mayor’s Office at 413-587-1249 or [mayor@northamptonma.gov](mailto:mayor@northamptonma.gov).